

# On *Kecimol* and *Nyongkolan*'s Values Transformation

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**Abstract**—Sasak tribe has various customs and traditions such as *Nyongkolan*, a religious wedding ceremony. In the last few years, there has been a shift of change in the meaning of *Nyongkolan* tradition because the musical accompaniment was modified. This study will examine the philosophical value of *gendang Beleq* as the musical accompaniment of *Nyongkolan*. It used descriptive qualitative method while the data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman which included data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, and verification. The philosophical values of *Nyongkolan* are *Epe-Aik* (The Proprietor), *Gumi-Paer* (Earth), *Budi-Kaye* (Characters-Virtues). The changes of meaning caused by *Kecimol* music were the decrease of social status, the violation of ethics, and the incitement of conflict of which these were the opposite of the original *Nyongkolan*'s value. It is, thus, important for the government to limit the use of *Kecimol* music in order to preserve the original value of *Nyongkolan*.

**Keywords**—philosophical, *Nyongkolan*, *gendang Beleq*, shift of value, *Kecimol*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In terms of wedding ceremony, each region has its own distinctive practice. Each region has its own customs which influence and even regulate this sacred religious ceremony. Wedding is defined as a religious ceremony while culture that influences religious ceremony is defined as art or custom. Art refers to the creative ability of human in responding to nature; the ability to solve a problem [1]. Therefore, it can be concluded that a religious ceremony closely related to the culture and custom of a region where the ceremony exists. Read [2] mentioned that religion and arts are closely related to each other empirically as they both have the same elements namely ritual and emotional. Langer [2] added that a work of art is often a spontaneous expression of feeling. Both of these statements suggested that there is a strong relation between art and religion.

Arts aesthetically influenced religious ceremony in its practice. James [2] explained that hint of aesthetic in religious awareness including ceremony came in three forms namely the sacrificial ceremony, confession, and prayer. All religious rituals have the potential to be influenced by local traditions that are aesthetically valuable such as the famous Padang Pariaman marriage procession, *Malam Bainai*. *Malam Bainai* is an extremely sacred event that is held to protect *Anak daro* (the

bride) from visible and invisible evil and to entertain her by holding traditional events such as *selawat*, *randai*, and *saluang*. This event also held to gather the family and prepare the wedding [3].

The assimilation of culture in *Malam Bainai* is clearly seen in the involved events such as *selawat*, *randai*, and *saluang*. Lombok also has its distinctive wedding ceremony (*Merariq*) called *Nyongkolan* which is the wedding custom of Sasak tribe. Before performing *Nyongkolan*, the bride must follow several rites such as *Basejati*, finding out the truth of an event particularly marriage [4]. The long wedding procession of Sasak tribe indicates that there is an assimilation between cultures and religious ceremony.

This study focused on *Nyongkolan* procession particularly its musical accompaniment. There were two kinds of musical accompaniment in *Nyongkolan* ceremony, *Gendang Beleq* and *Kecimol*. The former is a traditional music to accompany *Nyongkolan*. The music of *gendang Beleq* produces diatonic tone of Lombok *gamelan* which suits the custom and tradition of Sasak tribe. Because the procession is sacred, this music is chosen to accompany the bridal party. Unfortunately, *gendang Beleq* began to be replaced by modern music instrument. Recently, people prefer to use *Kecimol*, the modern musical accompaniment in *Nyongkolan* which usually contains pentatonic tunes of *dangdut* music. People favor *Kecimol* since the songs played are modern and attract youngsters to follow the procession. In addition, it is considered that the more people participate the more blessing the procession will received. Besides that, the pay of *Kecimol* player is lower than *gendang Beleq* player.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the research method. Section III presents the discussion. Finally, Section IV concludes this work.

## II. PROPOSED METHOD

This study used qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative method refers to the research procedure that produces data in the form of descriptive data or words in social, culture, religion, and philosophy [5]. According to Kaelan [6], the features of qualitative research are natural research condition, the

researcher as the main instrument, descriptive data, emphasizing the process rather than result, featuring direct and purposive data and emic perspective, analyzing data from the start of research, and analyzing data inductively. The data of this study are the philosophical values and the changes of value/message in *Nyongkolan* tradition. The data were gathered by observation, interview, and documentation while the key instrument were human. Then, the data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman that included 1) reducing data or selecting the most appropriate data, 2) presenting data or arranging the obtained data in order to draw a conclusion, 3) and drawing a conclusion and verification.

### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. *The Practice of Nyongkolan Tradition*

*Nyongkol* comes from the word *songkol/sondol* which means pushing from behind [4]. Thus, it can be defined as a procession of escorting the bride and groom from a certain place to the bride's home to inform the community that the couple has married. *Nyongkolan* is held along the same time of *sorong serah* ceremony. It is usually held in the late afternoon in big roads to invite people nearby to watch or escort the bride and groom. The order of the bridal party are:

- 1) The bearer of *karas*, a rectangular woven box containing betel nut carried by two girls dressed in typical Lombok attire (*Lambung*) followed by the bearer of betel leaf (*Lekoq*).
- 2) The bride wears the traditional attire of Sasak tribe such as *songket*, *kebaya*, *sanggul pangkah*, and golden jewellery. Two companions (*inang*) hold an umbrella over the bride's head as a symbol of honor.
- 3) Meanwhile, the groom wear *tenun (leang)*, *dodot*, *songket*, a *pegon* suit, a tie (*sapuq*), and *keris*. Two companions (*inang*) also hold an umbrella over the groom's head. The bride and the groom are not allowed to walk in parallel following the philosophy that a man has to guide or protect a woman.
- 4) These are followed by the bearer of a mini fruit garden (*Kebun Kodeq*) which symbolizes the welfare of the couple and the sustainability of the environment of their future home.
- 5) The musical accompaniment played is usually the traditional *gamelan* music known as *gendang Beleq*. Recently, modern musical accompaniment called *Kecimol* is performed to accompany *Nyongkolan* [4].

There is a large differences in both of these musical accompaniments which result from co-modification culture of *Nyongkolan*.

#### B. *The Philosophical Value of Lomboknese Community*

According to Van Peursen in Uhi [7], to philosophize is to penetrate, explore, and trace. Philosophy is seen as a never ending conversation so it can be understood as a set of

impressive system and constitution. Cultural philosophy will be meaningful, when human understand their times find their true identity through culture [7]. The procession of *Nyongkolan* is essential to the Sasak tribe community in terms of philosophical values. The identity of Lomboknese is pictured clearly in this procession which distinguishes it with non-Sasaknese or people outside Lombok. Eriksen in Kumbara [8] explained that:

*“social identification has to do with which groups a person belongs to, who he or she identifies with, how people establish and maintain invisible but socially effects boundaries between us and them”.*

This statement implies that identity is an aspect that can be interpreted through signs, taste, faith, attitude, and lifestyle. Identity is considered as personal as well as social and marks that "we are the same or different" with others. Identity is strongly related to the philosophical value that become the life perspective of a society. The word *philosophia* comes from *philos* (love) and *philia* (friendship, attracted to), and *sophos* (wisdom, knowledge, skill, practical experience, and intelligence) [9]. The philosophical value of *Nyongkolan* can be explained in philosophical phrases as explained below.

#### 1) *Epe-Aik (The Proprietor)*

*Epe-Aik* (The Proprietor) refers to God as the one who controls and holds power over human beings and the whole universe. This philosophy covers the relationship of human and God, how they worship God who created them and the whole universe and how they fulfill the obligations commanded by God (The Proprietor) as caliph on the earth [10].

The philosophy of being devout and pious to Allah SWT is clearly seen in this ceremony. The ceremony is performed to fulfill God's commandment as marriage is strongly suggested in the Holy Qur'an:

*“And marry those among you who are single and the righteous of your male and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them with His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.” [ QS. An-Nur (24): 32]*

Besides that, the command to marry also suggested by Rasulullah SAW. Narrated from Anas bin Malik Radhiyallahu anhu, Rasulullah Shallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam said that:

*“When a human marry, he/she has completed half of his religion; therefore he should be pious to Allah for the other half to be also completed” (Cited by Syaikh al-Albani in the book of ash-Shahihah no. 625).*

The religious commandment of marriage influences Sasak tribe community to divide the sacred ceremony in several processions based on local custom. This also implies that Sasaknese highly upholds the value of piety and faithfulness to

their God. The philosophy to upholding the teachings of religion is also evident from the series of procession carried out in this wedding ritual. It starts from *basejati* procession, which is to abduct the bride to the groom's house. However, it has to be noted that the prospective groom is forbidden to touch the bride even just her hair end before they pronounce the wedding vow. This also shows how faithful Lomboknese are to their religion since man and woman are not allowed to touch each other before they get married. Narrated by Ma'qil bin Yasar radhiallahu'anhu, Rasulullah Shallallahu'alaihi Wasallam said:

*"For one of you to be stabbed in the head with an iron needle is better for him than touch a woman is not permissible for him)" (HR ath-Thabarani in "al-Mu'jamul kabiir" (no. 486 and 487)*

Additionally, the bride and groom are not allowed to stand in parallel. The groom's party walk behind the bride's party because the religious commandment states that a man must be able to protect and guide his woman to be a better person and devoted wife.

Then, the philosophy that human are equal in front of Allah SWT also included in *Nyongkolan* procession especially *balas oles nae*. As has been mentioned before, the groom and his family visit the bride's home in the procession. After that, the bride's family must also visit the groom's home. This procession shows that both the bride and groom have equal rights to be visited by the respective family since they are equal in front of Allah SWT aside from their social status.

## 2) *Gumi-Paer (Earth)*

*Gumi-paer* (earth) means the earth where human live with all the resources provided by nature. Thus, human must live accordingly with their surrounding environment. *Gumi-paer* is where human born, grow, becoming adult, growing old, and a place to return to. This philosophy is related with the relationship of human and nature and also how human protect, utilize, and preserve the nature [10]. The philosophy of preserving nature is presented by the bearer of mini fruit garden. The mini fruit garden carried by girls who wear traditional Sasak attire convey a message that Lombok island is fertile and on its ground many kinds of plants grow well.

Next, the philosophy of escorting the bride and groom means that the couple will love nature and plant the earth of Lombok with various beneficial plants. The traditional attire and music instrument used in *Nyongkolan* also symbolize the philosophy of utilizing nature. The bride who wears traditional *kebaya* and *songket* looks graceful while the groom looks handsome wearing *dodot* made from *tenun* material. This describes the harmony between nature and human especially Sasak tribe. In addition, how Lomboknese community wisely use the bounty nature also can be seen in the raw materials of *Gendang Beleq* instrument which is made from Meranti woods and cow hide, both of which are bountiful in Lombok island.

Finally, the bearer of *gendang Beleq* symbolizes the philosophy of preserving nature. The huge *gendang* is carried and played all the way to the bride's home without ever dropping it. It symbolizes the hard work of a man who keeps his musical instruments made of natural materials with hope that the groom is keen in preserving nature and being responsible to his future family.

## 3) *Budi-Kaye (Wealth of Virtue)*

*Budi-kaye* refers to wealth of virtue that comes from being aware of *budi-daye Sang Hyang Suksma*, the Mighty God that granted sense and mind to human. It means that human as God's creation are kind, fair, and wise in finding the blessing of the Almighty Allah SWT in order to always be guided and blessed in life [10].

Then, the philosophy of *musyawarah* is present in the pre-*Nyongkolan* procession which is called *sorong serah tempat*. This event involves discussing the marriage and solve the presenting problems such as social status. It also means that both sides have made a deal and discussed the matter politely without making any conflict.

Then, the philosophy of piety and fidelity can be seen from order of the procession in Sasak wedding ceremony from *basejati* sampai *bales ones nae*. The fidelity of Sasaknese to its custom indicates that they highly uphold and respect their custom with hope that the couple is blessed in their marriage.

## C. *The Relationship between Nyongkolan and Gendang Beleq*

The philosophical values of *Epe-Aik* (The Proprietor), *Gumi-Paer* (Earth), dan *Budi-Kaye* (Wealth of Virtue) also has a strong relation with the musical accompaniment of *Nyongkolan*, *gendang Beleq*. *Gendang Beleq* is a musical ansamble which consists of *Gendang Mama*, *Gendang Nine*, *Cemprang*, *Perembaq*, *Petug*, *Oncer*, *Rincig*, *Reong Mama*, *Reong Nine*, *Gong Mama*, and *Gong Nine* [11]. The distinctive feature of *gendang Beleq* is that it has two large *gendang* namely *Gendang Mama* (male *gendang*) dan *Gendang Nina* (female *gendang*) both of which produce different sound. The former produces higher tone than the latter [12]. Saifuddin [13], explained that the sound of *Gendang Beleq* makes the wedding celebrations more lively according to Sasaknese. Thus, it is frequently performed in cultural events especially in traditional wedding celebration. Sasak tribe community also consider that *Nyongkolan* procession will be more solemn and sacred when *gendang Beleq* is performed to accompany the procession. These instruments which are divided into female and male (*mama* dan *nina*) indicates a strong relation with *Nyongkolan* as if want to tell the world that marriage will bring forth beautiful and harmonious melodies. So does the notion that all beings in this world has been created in pairs as been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

*"And it is He who spread the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers; and from all of the fruits He made therein two*

*mates; He causes the night to cover the day. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. [QS. Ar-Ra'd (13): 3]*

In addition, *gendang Beleq* also informs the nearby community that the couple has officially and legally married. It shows that Sasak tribe are pious and obedient to one of the hadith as follows:

*"The Prophet saw traces of yellow perfume on Abdur-Rahmaan bin 'Awf, and he asked him "What is this?" He said: " O Messenger of Allah, I married a women with a coin of gold as the dowry. He said: "May Allah bless you. Give a feast even if is is only with one sheep." (HR. Ibnu Majah) (Islam.com)*

*Gendang Beleq* with its traditional music attract people to see the wedding ceremony, and it also in accordance with the religious commandment of appropriate wedding celebration because people will see that the couples have married and therefore are legal.

#### D. The Co-modification of *Gendang Beleq* into *Kecimol*

The relation of *gendang Beleq* and *Nyongkolan* indicates that Lombok community especially Sasak tribe believe that everything in this world are created in pairs as symbolized by *gendang mama* (male *gendang*) and *gendang nina* (female *gendang*) which also shows the mightiness of God, the creator of universe.

#### E. The Form of *Kecimol*

*Kecimol* is another musical accompaniment of *Nyongkolan* which is the modern counterpart of *Gendang Beleq*. The existence of *Kecimol* has gradually replaced *gendang Beleq* as the musical accompaniment of *Nyongkolan*. The majority of people think that *gendang Beleq* is outdated and so they choose modern music such as *dangdut koplo*. Modern music instruments such as marching band, guitar, and bass in *Kecimol* are considered to be more lively in accompanying *Nyongkolan*. In the old days, the music or songs played in *Kecimol* were traditional or local songs sung in Sasak language. However, recently people begin to prefer *dangdut koplo* which they deem more modern. *Kecimol* itself consists of several parts as explained below.

##### 1) The Marching Band

It is the forefront of the entire group, and consists of several players playing snare drum, tenor, bass drum and kuarto tom-tom. The number of the players are varied from two personnel or more for each music tool.

##### 2) The Guitar and Bass Player

This group consists of two people who each play the guitar and the bass while walking behind the bridal party.

##### 3) The Dancer

The dancer usually consists of one or two young girls who dance sensually between the guitar and bass player. It is common to see people being eager to give money to the dancer.

##### 4) The Sound System

The sound system is carried in a cart and pulled behind the dancer. The sound speaker is usually huge and even taller than the porter. It also produces extremely loud sound that can reach far away places.

##### 5) The Vocalist

The vocalist sing the most popular song, usually *dangdut koplo* songs, behind the sound system.

##### 6) The Attire/Wardrobe

All *Kecimol* performers wear their respective group shirts. The player do not wear traditional clothing. They only wear regular T-shirt adorned by the name of their group and long pants. Likewise, the dancer wears tight shirt and jeans or mini skirt. From the description of the form and player of *Kecimol*, it can be seen that *Kecimol* is not appropriate to be performed in the sacred wedding ceremony of Sasak tribe. Unfortunately, more people favor this musical accompaniment and it is frequently played from year to year.

#### F. The Shift of *Nyongkolan* Values

The values of *Nyongkolan* can be seen from the symbols presented from the beginning to the end of the ceremony. Each procession is connected to each other in the whole wedding ceremony because *nyongkol* is a part of a Sasak tribe wedding ceremony in Lombok [4]. The advances of globalization has influences *Nyongkolan* that its musical accompaniment has been modified into modern music. The typical diatonic tunes of *gendang Beleq* has been replaced by pentatonic tunes produced by drum and guitar. This happened as most people want a new kind of music. Although the changes do not instantly shift or change the sacred value of *Nyongkolan*.

##### 1) The Decrease of Social Status

*Nyongkolan* tradition used to be considered as a means to elevate one's social status in his/her community. As has been mentioned before, this ceremony is held to announce that the couples has been officially married [4]. Then, it can be seen that *Nyongkolan* should be accompanied by traditional *gendang Beleq* music which can represent the custom and the philosophy of *Nyongkolan*.

Meanwhile, when the sacred procession is accompanied by the sensual and modern *Kecimol*, people will think that the value of *Nyongkolan* is spoiled. Additionally, most people tend to be less orderly as they are absorbed by the music of *Kecimol* and this often disturbs the traffic on the road. People who used

to consider that *Nyongkolan* is a sacred ceremony are now thinking that the tradition is the main cause of heavy traffic. The society in Lombok even give a name to *Nyongkolan* that play *Kecimol* music namely *KECIMOL* (KElalah CIkar MOntor LIwat) means that it troubles carts and motorcycles on the road. As a result, the sacred *Nyongkolan* which should elevate the social status of the bride and groom shifts into the opposite because people less respect it and think that the tradition is only a meaningless celebration.

## 2) *The Violation of Ethic*

*Nyongkol* is a tradition bounded by Sasak custom, and therefore it should follow the order of the custom. These orders are reflection of the code of conduct of society that if being violated will result in a social life disorder [4]. The ethics or attitude of the Sasak community is strongly illustrated from this traditional ceremony, how it goes on the streets and invites people along the way to follow the procession with the sound of *gendang Beleq* that reinforces a sacred atmosphere in the ceremony. Then again, if *Kecimol* is played instead of *gendang Beleq*, the ethics and virtue teachings of Sasak community will be ruined by the sensual dance and tumultuous *dangdut* music in *Kecimol*. Besides that, some of *Kecimol* music players have the habit to drink liquor before performing in a *Nyongkolan*. This is certainly a bad influence to the people who watch the procession. Additionally, the sound and the dance are inappropriate and uncontrollable that makes the traditional ceremony similar to a *dangdut koplo* concert, not the sacred religious ceremony. *Nyongkolan* which should be a reflection of the ethics Lombok community becomes a reflection of ethical violations instead. The customary procession which is the religious commandment and which should contain ethical values is tainted with ethical violations, both ethics towards God, society and the surrounding environment.

## 3) *The Incitement of Conflict*

*Nyongkolan* is essentially an event to reconnect the family of bride and groom because until after *sorong serah aji karma*, both family do not talk to each other. During that time, they seemed hostile to each other and thus when the *Nyongkolan* is held, both family meet again and reconcile. This tradition is also motivated by a principle that marriage becomes a means to extend and expand kinship [4].

The value of resolving conflict in *Nyongkolan* procession is also depicted in several aspects. First, the dispute occurred in the *sorong serah* regarding dowry, wedding location, and other wedding related problems are being resolved in *Nyongkolan*. Then, both family and kin of the bride and groom meet directly in the occasion where they can reconcile and build a relation. Accompanied by *gendang Beleq*, the atmosphere becomes livelier while still retain its sacredness. Both family will enjoy the occasion and live the moment as if they meet again after being separated for a long time.

Unfortunately, this value of resolving conflict shifts when *Kecimol* is performed as the musical accompaniment. The tumultuous music of *Kecimol* spoils the value *Nyongkolan*. Getting drunk becomes a common thing for most of *Kecimol*

player. The tumultuous music and drunkenness often causes chaotic atmosphere and even a brawl between the spectator and the *Kecimol* player. Thus, it can be concluded that the value of *Nyongkolan* shifts into that of provoking conflict. It is unfortunate that the sacred ceremony is spoiled by brawl caused by liquor and *dangdut* music played in *Kecimol*.

## G. *Gendeng Beleq as the Compulsory Musical Accompaniment in Nyongkolan*

To avoid the shift of value and meaning of the sacred traditional ceremony, it is necessary for the government and local tribe leaders to make a plan that can preserve *gendang Beleq* and prevent co-modification of the instruments. Such a plan has begun to be carried out by village chief of Padamara, East Lombok, who decided to ban *Kecimol* from *Nyongkolan*.

*Head of Sub-district Police Department, Lalu Mukti Ali, confirmed that Kecimol often caused a quarrel in Nyongkolan. He stated that the village chief has forbid the community to play Kecimol in Nyongkolan procession" [14].*

This can be an excellence model for other local government to be assertive towards *Kecimol* which can damage the custom and order of Sasak tribe and cause conflict in each *Nyongkolan* ceremony procession. To prevent unemployment because of the ban, the government need to teach player of *Kecimol* group to play *gendang Beleq*. Determining *Gendang Beleq* to be the only musical accompaniment will restore the identity of the sacred *Nyongkolan*.

## IV. CONCLUSION

A culture that influences a religious ceremony is the treasure of a region. Each culture bring different influences depending on the area where the religious ceremony is held. The wedding procession on the island of Sumatra must be different from the island of Java which in turn also different from Bali and so on. In spite of that, these processions have the same goal of uniting two human beings because of religious commandment. Custom that can influence religious commandment is a treasure that has to be preserved as it contains the identity of the place where the ceremony is originated.

We cannot avoid co-modification because of the rapid development of times and technology. The shift of meaning in a custom ceremony is not new. However, the shift should not drift the meaning into a negative direction such as the case with *Nyongkolan* and *Kecimol*. Co-modification is unavoidable in the age of rapid globalization and advanced technology. What important is to prevent the co-modification so that it does not destroy the value and identity of the sacred traditional ceremony. In fact, co-modification should reinforce the philosophical value of a traditional procession.

The dispute over *Kecimol* as the musical accompaniment of *Nyongkolan* has not been the focus of the central government. As a result, there are many regions that still proudly perform

*Kecimol* in accompanying the sacred religious ceremony. It is hoped that the study can raise the government's awareness to regulate this religious ceremony in order to prevent the loss of meaning and value.

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